Endless Life

by badly-knitted

Summary: When Jack revives after dying with John Ellis, he and Ianto talk. Set towards the end of 'Out Of Time' and written for the prompt 'Torchwood, Jack, He's died too many times,' at fic promptly.

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Author: badly-knitted

Characters: Jack, Ianto.

Rating: PG

Spoilers: Out Of Time.

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Word Count: 567

**Written For: **My own prompt 'Torchwood, Jack, He's died too many times,' at fic_promptly.

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"I've died so many times, Ianto. Too many times. Humans aren't meant to live like this, dying and coming back to life just to die all over again, some other place and time by some other means. It's exhausting and sometimes I just wish that I could end it for good. You have no idea what it's like."

It was true; Ianto didn't know, couldn't even begin to imagine what Jack went through every time he died.

Ianto had followed the trackers installed in all their vehicles and found the SUV outside John's old shop, his own car in the garage, engine still running. Waiting while the fumes cleared enough for him to get in there and pull out the bodies had seemed like an eternity, but almost before he'd dragged Jack's dead weight out into the shop's small back yard, away from prying eyes, his captain had been coughing and choking his way back to life. That had been welcome, if unexpected, and Ianto had rushed back for John, hoping against hope that he'd been in time to save them both, but it wasn't to be.

Jack had come to help him, fully recovered, which Ianto had known was impossible. He should have needed hospital treatment, but he looked the picture of health, if desperately weary and defeated, and smelling powerfully of exhaust fumes. In the face of Ianto's bewilderment, Jack had realised he had no choice but to tell the unvarnished truth.

"I can't die. At least not permanently."

The revelation hadn't been as much of a shock to Ianto as it probably should have been; he'd suspected for some time that Jack wasn't quite like other people. Knowing that he actually died and came back to life rather than simply being extremely long-lived had been a bit disconcerting though. The implications were chilling. So much suffering…

Now they're back at the Hub, sitting in Jack's office, sipping Scotch. John's body is in the morgue, another victim of the Rift. The only consolation is that his soul is at peace, unlike Jack's.

"I'm sorry." The words are inadequate, but Ianto says them anyway. What else can he do in the face of Jack's despair?

"Most of the time it's not so bad." Jack manages a weak smile. "It's just… talking to John brought a lot of stuff to the surface. He was like me, stuck in a time that wasn't his own, everyone he'd ever loved gone, knowing he could never go home. My family, my parents, hell, even my grandparents and their grandparents, haven't been born yet. I won't be born for three thousand years, and yet here I am, alive. And it never ends. Sometimes I wonder if I'll just keep living and dying and living again to the end of time, and it scares me. Everyone I ever meet dies and I just keep going. It gets lonely."

Ianto reaches for Jack's hand and squeezes it. "Is there anything I can do to help?"

"You do help, just by caring enough to ask. Just keep being you, Ianto Jones; you make my life a little brighter and easier to bear by being here, keeping me company. I don't know what I'd do without you."

"I'll be here for as long as you want me."

They both know that's impossible, but it's a nice thought.

Jack smiles sadly. "I wish you could be."

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